

A SERIOUS
LETTER
TO THE
PUBLIC,

On the late Transaction between
LORD NORTH
AND THE
DUKE OF GORDON.

BY JUNIUS. *K.*

"Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in Malice."

L O N D O N :

Printed for HOOPER and DAVIS, 25, Ludgate-hill.

MDCCLXXVIII.

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Nothing contained in this work is to be construed as an

imputation on the character or conduct of any person

mentioned in the title

Printed for Messrs. and Davies and I. Johnson

MDCCLXXVII

TO THE
PARTIZANS
OF THE
MINORITY.

"Want of charity is no argument."

My Fellow-subjects!

SO much has been said in conversation and so much maliciously written in all the news-papers about a recent transaction between Lord North and the Duke of Gordon, with a view to blacken

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the *principles* of administration, and to inflame the minds of the Public, more than to come at the truth, and to render a real service to the nation; that I think myself called upon, by *truth and national virtue*, as a dispassionate man, to state the case fairly, that the world may judge where merit lies, and to whom honor is due, that, in the scriptural phrase, this nation, ever just and generous, may “*give unto Caesar that which is Caesars.*” My motto is very applicable to the subject, and merits a due attention from the Public, before they enter upon the consideration of this letter.

If you, my Compatriots, can, as my motto recommends, command your passions for a moment, and divest yourselves intirely of the prejudices of party,

I shal

I shall have no doubt of *convincing* you of the egregious errors into which you are artfully and industriously led by the leaders of opposition; and of *converting* you to a well-grounded faith in the present ADMINISTRATION, who will appear, to the conviction of men of sense and candor, to be the best friends to the people; by securing the national dignity and the most valuable rights of the subjects, while, by the most delusive, treacherous, and reprehensible conduct, the MINORITY strengthen the hands of our domestic and foreign enemies, and endeavour, contrary to our national honor and interest, to *surrender* the dignity and property of the crown, and the rights and advantages of the people.

Many, indeed, very many instances, of the baneful influence of the Minority, and of the delusion of their misinformed and misguided partizans, occur to me at present ; but I shall choose only one, and the most recent, Because the affair is fresh, in every body's memory ; and the Public, from their own knowledge, will, when they have heard my *account* of the transaction, and the *conclusion*, do me the justice to acknowledge that I have strictly followed the celebrated advice of the poet : " Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

A faithful account of this matter will shew, in strong colours, the absurdity of your political principles, which are founded in the grossest falsehoods, and the greatest injustice to administration ;
and,

and, for the sake of unanimity, for the honor and interest of the nation, upon the present critical occasion, may God, in his divine goodness, grant that “ a
 “ sense of truth and justice to men vested
 “ with legal authority, may recover you
 “ from delusion, divest you of party pre-
 “ judices, and impress the minds of my
 “ countrymen with the firmest conviction
 “ of the virtues of our most amiable So-
 “ vereign, and of the true patriotism of
 “ his servants, commonly called Admi-
 “ nistration !” Their credit, their honor, interest, and every thing that is dear to them, as men and as ministers, are inseparable from the rights and happiness of the people ; and no demonstration in Euclid can be clearer than this truth—that the Sovereign, the Ministry, and the People, can have but one interest, and consequently

se frequently but *one cause*, whatever artful men may say, to separate the *views* of administration from those of their fellow-subjects.

The recent transaction, which has made so much noise, between Lord North and the Duke of Gordon, which I produce as one of the innumerable instances of the want of truth and justice in the Minority, and the delusion and infatuation of their partizans, was as follows:

The Duke of Gordon wished to obtain for his brother, Lord William Gordon, a post of honor and profit, equal, at least, to one thousand pounds per ann. in the gift of the noble Lord who presides at the Treasury with national honor, and with the applause of men of sense and candor. His Grace took the
most

most direct method of obtaining it, by applying personally to the noble Lord.

Lord North, with that frankness which characterises him, and which denotes an honest heart and a great mind (the merit of which even his greatest enemies never denied him before) told the noble Duke how he was *previously* circumstanced with a friend. It was not a previous engagement of such a nature as totally precluded his Grace ; but *prior* to the Duke's application, the ties of friendship and honor had given the place, an *opportunity* and the noble Lord an *inclination* to oblige a friend, not directly with that appointment, but indirectly by the operation of it.

In this situation, wishing to oblige a friend, who had a right to Lord North's
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consideration *prior* to the noble Duke, how was his Lordship to act consistently, so as to oblige *both*, as was evidently his generous and disinterested intention? The noble Lord could not divide it, nor, in an inferior state, would it has been equal to the transcendent merit and dignity of the noble Duke. Lord North wished by *that means* (a method always practised and never before objected to as unfair) to get a friend into Parliament, and his Grace wanted it for one of his brothers, who was *not* in the House, and therefore could not create a vote, by resignation, or what is generally termed *vacating a seat* to make room for another.

Now let party prejudice yeild to reason, or in the divine language of the Poet,
 "Hear reason and let justice hold the
 "scale

“scale.” Let the candid man lay his hand upon his breast and say, what line of conduct was marked out for Lord North so as to oblige the Duke of Gordon consistent with a *prior* engagement to another friend, to the performance of which his Lordship was bound by the great ties of inclination, friendship and honor? The noble Lord certainly could not dispense with the principles which have ever been nearest to his heart, and which are as inseparable, as life, from his nature and character. And as that was an opportunity to evince his principles, and to shew his sense of honor and virtue, there only remained for his Lordship to let the Duke candidly know the nature of his *prior* engagement, and that he could only grant his request conditionally, not with the least interested or party view of

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his

his own, but merely to satisfy a prior demand of honor.

The man who has a right to give has an undoubted right either to refuse totally or to make conditions of the most honorable nature. Admitting this *common* right, which is founded in *common* sense and on the experience of all ages, it will evidently appear that a condition, which meant an advantage to the receiver, is so far from departing from virtue, so far from disgracing the donor, or degrading the receiver, that it must undoubtedly meet with the hearty approbation of every man of honor and candor. The noble Duke could have no just cause of offence because the acceptance was *optional*, and what depends upon our pleasure cannot be accounted either unjust or injurious.

Let

Let the MINORITY put their hands to their hearts and tell me whether the most *modest*, the most *virtuous* declaimer against all measures of administration, right or wrong, would be *offended* at a post of honor and profit with a *Rider* upon it? If it were not altogether convenient to accept it, they would not be offended at the offer. Offence, upon such an occasion, must be ill grounded, because it has no foundation either in justice or reason.

✓ The noble Duke was perfectly at liberty, without the least compulsion, incompatible with the nicest sense of honor, either to accept or refuse the condition; but his Grace had certainly no right at all to be offended at it, because it arose from the most honorable principle, and the most noble motives on the part of

Lord North.—It arose from the delicacy of a *pledge of honor*, which, as a man, as a senator, and a minister, his Lordship has always held sacred.

What were the *terms* offered by the noble Lord, and what was the *manner* in which they were offered?

“If it is *convenient* to your Grace’s brother, Lord George Gordon, to oblige my friend, by vacating his seat, I shall be happy in the opportunity of obliging your Grace, by the appointment of your noble brother, Lord William.”

That was the condition of mutual convenience, and *that* the politeness, delicacy and dignity with which it was suggested. As that is undeniably the case, let envy, malice and detraction

blush

blush if they have a sense of shame or a tincture of modesty. Let the most rancorous heart say, where is the criminality or culpability of such a mutual obligation, by which it is evident the noble Duke was to be the most obliged?

Instead of public censure, of the most venomous sort, and personal abuse, the most disgraceful to human nature, does not the whole transaction reflect the greatest honor on the sentiments and principles of Lord North? And instead of the bitter reproaches of deluded men, ought not the Public to think themselves happy, on this critical occasion (in which so much is at stake) and to thank Heaven for placing our national security and happiness under the care of a minister who possesses such noble principles, which would do

do honor to any state and to any
age?

To spurn at an offer which flows from
motives of the most exalted nature, and
which do honor to this country, must
arise from strong passions and little reflec-
tion. Had it been a *compulsive* transac-
tion which affected either the honor or
the interest of the noble Duke, it would
have constituted an offence and justified
a resentment. But it was so far from
compulsive, that it was optional and
intirely at the pleasure of the noble Duke
either to accept or refuse the condition
as it might best suit the convenience and
purposes of his two noble brothers.

The censure, therefore, resulting from
this affair, in which the Minority have
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so invidiously triumphed, and polluted the streams of public information, to corrupt and inflame the minds of the people; I say, the censure is unmerited and unjust, and the noble Duke's brother, Lord George, has discovered a very weak head and perhaps a very bad heart by inflaming the minds of the people in terms that would disgrace his *footman*.

The epithets *infamous* and *villainous* are only applicable to the miserable objects of our criminal laws, who disgrace human nature, and not to a minister whose head and heart do honor to this country. When Lord North was so grossly attacked he shewed a delicacy peculiar to a good heart and a dignity suitable to a great mind, when he mildly termed the language of Lord George Gordon *unparliamentary*.

+ pollution, is here meant
to taint with guilt.

liamentary. In the respectable place in which the words were spoken (in the heat of passion and the prejudice of party) it was a gross insult upon the whole body of the people's representatives; who were disgraced by the adoption of such *Billingsgate* expressions: and had the members not been blinded by party passions and ungenerous prejudices against administration, they certainly would have shewn a due sense of the honor of their illustrious house, by resenting it as a gross insult upon that august assembly of the nation, where delicacy and a just sense of legislative dignity and parliamentary honor should shine with the greatest splendor.

Would nothing satisfy the Duke of Gordon but *passive obedience and unconditional*

tional submission to his pleasure? Can there exist a doubt of Lord North's right to oblige his own friend as well as the noble Duke? And let candor say whether the Minister had not a right to expect that so desirable a post as Lord Admiral of Scotland, worth 1000l. per annum, should *beger* a vote in parliament? But, says Lord George, his Grace's brother (who is *in* parliament, and it was proposed *he* should vacate for the convenience of Lord William, who has *not* a seat to resign) it was *infamous and villainous*, because I was to be sacrificed. Admitting that to be the event, who would have been blameable? Had there been any culpability in the transaction, would not the Duke have been blameable, at whose desire and for the convenience and advantage of Lord George's

own brother the sacrifice was to have been made? There is as great a difference between an optional concession and a compulsive sacrifice, as there is between right and wrong. The one is an injury arising from a violation, the other is a convenience for which, in this case, a very noble consideration was to be given to a brother, consistent with the nicest sense of honor and dignity.

I repeat this material circumstance, that Lord North did not *force* the condition, and oblige the surrender, but left it entirely at the option of the Duke, to suit it to the convenience and purpose of his Grace's two brothers. And therefore had the condition been accepted, to provide for Lord William Gordon at the price of his brother Lord George's seat in parliament,

ment, which could not have been done without the angry brother's concurrence, (which is another instance against compulsion and complaint) nobody but the Duke could have been blamed had it not eventually answered the purpose of his brother, Lord George.

Lord George Gordon, with a heat of temper peculiar to his own country, says; the condition was a *corrupt* bargain, tending to destroy the *integrity* of the people's representatives; but he is not pleased to say in what that *corruption*, in this case, consists. Corruption and integrity are principles so opposite and of so much consequence to the nation, when applied to the representatives of the people, that they should not be mentioned at random. To corrupt, is to destroy the integrity of

the representative body, and to weaken the security of the people's power and rights, which would be endangered by corruption. This, I apprehend, is the meaning, and this the fatal consequence ; and therefore whenever such language is used it should be explained, in justice to to the person it alludes to, and for the satisfaction of the people, who are naturally alarmed at an evil that endangers every thing that is dear to them ; because their liberties and interests depend upon the *integrity* of their representatives, which is their great security, and that national security will be destroyed whenever the principles of the senate are corrupted? It is therefore, not surprizing at all that the people, who are ever tenacious of their rights, and extremely jealous of administration, should be alarmed at an accusation
against

against the first minister, of his having a design to corrupt the *Integrity* of the representative body, on which all their present national blessings and future hopes are founded. To remove their fears, and to give them a just idea of the good designs of the minister, I have undertaken to explain the matter, with more prolixity than was necessary for the satisfaction of many, in order to adapt it to the understanding of the public, in general, that conviction may be carried to the heart of readers of every denomination; and I trust that every man of candor will acknowledge there never was a case so free from a design of corruption as the recent transaction between the noble Lord at the head of administration and the Duke of Gordon.

Had

Had Lord North attempted, by any undue ministerial influence to deprive Lord George, or any other member, of his seat in parliament, it would have had a corrupt complexion; but so far was it from arising from any undue ministerial means, that it appears very evidently his Lordship has been influenced by motives of the most exalted nature.

Then let Lord George Gordon be silent, and, as forgiveness is the characteristic of a great mind, like Lord North's, let him make amends to the injured minister and to the misguided public, by imitating his Lordship's principles of honor, his delicacy of sentiment, and his manliness of expression.

A word

A word to the leaders of the Minority,
and I have done.

How would the *integrity* of the people's representatives have been corrupted by this transaction had it taken place? I apprehend their principles can only be corrupted when the members are made subservient to party purposes, and when a good man is unjustly displaced to make room for a bad one, that is, one who is inimical to the rights of the people. That would be a just cause of complaint, because, in the first instance, it would be an act of injustice to the person removed, and, in the second, the people's rights would be endangered by the principles of the obnoxious man; but the present case bears not the least resemblance to such a mode of corruption, but *vice versa*. From the
exalted

exalted principles of Lord North, which have shone so conspicuously on this, and indeed upon every other occasion, it may, without breach of charity, be supposed, that the noble Lord's friend is quite as worthy a man as the Duke's brother; and that, by removing *one Scotchman* to make room for an *Englishman*, the House of Commons would not have been corrupted, nor the rights and liberties of the people endangered.

JUNIUS.

THE END.

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